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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 10 TOKYO 000280

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Prime Minister's schedule, February 5

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
February 6, 2009

07:40

Met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsumoto at the Kantei.

09:01

Lower House Budget Committee meeting.

12:08

Arrived at the Kantei.

13:00

Lower House Budget Committee meeting.

17:12

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Met with Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura.

17:32

Met members of the Plum Delegate, including the chief priest Nobuyoshi Nishitakatsuji of Dazaifu Tenmangu, at the Kantei. Lower House member Yoshiaki Harada was present. Then met with Cabinet Intelligence Director Mitani.

18:09

Met with Colombian Ambassador to Japan Cardenas. Foreign Ministry Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau Director General Sato was present. Then met with Comprehensive Maritime Policy Headquarters Secretariat chief Oba.

19:09

Met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Uruma.

20:00

Dined with Special Advisor to LDP Vice President Shimamura at Yamazato, a Japanese restaurant at Hotel Okura.

22:00

Arrived at the official residence.

4) U.S. Secretary of State Clinton to visit Japan starting on the 16th

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
February 6, 2009

The Foreign Ministry in the early hours of February 6 announced that U.S. Secretary of State Clinton will visit Japan for three days starting on the 16th. She is expected to meet with Prime Minister Taro Aso and Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone to reaffirm the importance of the Japan-U.S. alliance. She will likely exchange views on such issues as North Korea's nuclear ambitions during those talks. She is scheduled to visit China and South Korea as well. She will underscore the Obama administration's stance of attaching importance to Asia, by choosing Japan and other Asian countries as the destination of her first official overseas trip.

5) Info centers to be set up in neighboring countries against Somalia pirates

MAINICHI (Top play) (Full)
February 6, 2009

A group of countries will set up antipiracy regional coordination centers to share information about pirates rampant in waters off the eastern African coast of Somalia, sources revealed yesterday. The centers will be set up in Yemen, Kenya, and Tanzania. Japan will also participate in the initiative. The centers will integrate pirate information, which will be provided to ships under way in waters off Somalia. In addition, the centers are also expected to exchange information with U.S.-led coalition forces and European Union forces.

The antipiracy regional coordination centers will be set up in conformity with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1851. A contact group—which is made of 24 countries, including Japan, the United States, Britain, and China, plus five international organizations, including the International Maritime Organization

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(IMO)—held a meeting in New York on Jan. 14 and decided to set up the centers at an early date within the year. Meanwhile, late last month, officials from countries neighboring Somalia held a meeting in Djibouti to consult on antipiracy measures and adopted a course of action calling on the United Nations to set up the centers. The contact group will hold a workshop in London on Feb. 24-27 to detail specifics, such as how to share information and how to run the centers.

The coordination centers are intended primarily for the contact group's member countries to share information about pirate incidents without delay. The centers will analyze the trend and backdrop of pirate incidents and are also expected provide analytical reports to their members. In addition, the centers will also undertake coordination for operational cooperation through such measures as requesting help for victims and spotting suspects and rounding them up. Each country will conclude a regional cooperation agreement to participate in the centers.

In November 2006, Japan took the initiative against pirates and established an information sharing center in Singapore. This became a model for the coordination centers. Japan will take a proactive role in the centers' establishment as well.

Japanese commercial ships passing through the waters off Somalia are under the protection of EU naval ships and participate in the British navy's position reporting system. However, there has been no mechanism in place to integrate pirate information for various countries to share. As it stands, the centers' establishment has been awaited.

On Jan. 28, Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada told the Maritime Self-Defense Force to ready destroyers for an antipiracy mission in waters off the coast of Somalia. Hamada is expected to order the MSDF in March to send destroyers for the mission by invoking an action for maritime security policing activities under the Self-Defense Forces Law. In the case of maritime security policing activities, the MSDF is not allowed to guard foreign ships. The ruling parties' antipiracy project team is now drafting a new law for antipiracy measures, and its members will visit Djibouti and other countries.

6) EU-led Operation Atalanta commander calls for protection of vessels not connected with Japan, as well, on Somalia anti-piracy mission; Expresses hopes for dispatch of P-3Cs

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 6) (Full)
February 6, 2009

Hiroshi Hoshi, London

UK Royal Navy's Rear Admiral Philip Jones, who is the commander of the EU-led anti-piracy Operation Atalanta, gave an interview to the Tokyo Shimbun on February 4 at the unit's headquarters in Northwood. In it, the commander expressed his strong hopes for the dispatch of P-3C patrol planes to waters off Somalia, which is being studied by Japan's Defense Ministry.

The EU launched Operation Atalanta last December as its first maritime operation. Four naval vessels have been dispatched to escort vessels carrying World Food Program (WFP) relief supplies and patrol in the Gulf of Aden and waters off Somalia. Expanding the

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information-gathering capability is a pressing challenge.

Commander Jones explained: "Currently, two patrol planes are engaged in the operation. Reconnaissance photographs have been used for the multinational force's maritime security operations. But they have barely been enough." He also indicated that if Japan decides to dispatch P-3Cs, he would greatly welcome it.

In the Gulf of Aden and waters off Somalia, naval vessels of such countries as China and Russia are also deployed, in addition to those of the EU. Sharing information and coordinating areas of activities are also vital. The commander indicated that the operation has entered a phase that needs progress on diplomatic cooperative relations regarding anti-piracy measures, saying: "As seen in the establishment of a common operational frequency, there exist advanced cooperative relations at sea. We have asked the EU to confirm them politically."

Regarding a situation in which a vessel is attacked by pirates, the commander said: "The nearest naval vessel is to rush to the scene. I believe that is naval vessels' duty under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea." Nevertheless, even if the Maritime Self-Defense Force is dispatched, they are allowed to protect only Japanese-related vessels. The protection of foreign vessels with no connection to Japan requires a new law.

Of this point, the commander said: "Some EU members do not have anti-piracy legislation, and this creates legal problems in prosecuting seized pirates and other vents. It is extremely difficult to protect EU-related vessels alone in a convoy of commercial vessels, and we don't do such."

He also took this view on long-term anti-piracy measures: "Our operation is designed to take stopgap measures. We can intimidate pirates (with military action), but we cannot give them a source of income in place of piracy. There is no other option but to search for a regional solution by getting countries near Somalia involved."

7) Dispatch of patrol planes envisaged on anti-piracy mission;
Defense Ministry to send survey team

ASAHI (Page 34) (Abridged slightly)
February 6, 2009

Jun Kashimoto, Yasuyuki Sasaki

The Defense Ministry announced yesterday that for the planned anti-piracy mission in waters off Somalia, the ministry would send its personnel to four countries near the Gulf of Aden, such as Djibouti and Bahrain, between February 8 and 20. The focus will be on examining airports that would serve as bases for the Maritime Self-Defense Force's patrol planes. This comes from the thinking that in order for MSDF destroyers to find Japanese-related vessels in the open seas and avoid colliding with such vessels, the operation of patrol planes with a wide range of surveillance is indispensable.

What the Defense Ministry and the SDF aims at is surveillance and deterrence to keep pirates away from Japanese-related vessels. When a suspicious vessel is found, a destroyer-based helicopter will warn it via radio not to approach the fleet. If the vessel approaches the

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fleet, helicopters and naval vessels will fire warning shots. But the range of surveillance of the radar of a destroyer is a dozen or so kilometers. Such is only a tiny spot in the pirate-infested Gulf of Aden stretching some 1,000 kilometers, according to a senior MSDF officer.

Then surfaced the option of using P-3Cs. The P-3C, which is responsible for detecting a submarine and the like, can fly up to 10 hours. One P-3C is capable of searching an area equivalent to Shikoku. The plane can determine if a vessel is suspicious or not at an altitude of several hundred meters. It can convey a vessel's location and its course to destroyers and naval vessels of other countries.

The anti-piracy operations being conducted by countries in the vicinity of the Gulf of Aden can be grouped into three categories: (1) the U.S.-led multinational force, (2) the European Union (EU), and (3) independent operations. Only a small number of countries have deployed patrol planes. A senior uniformed officer expressed his hopes that the deployment of P-3Cs would play the roles of surveillance and deterrence, saying, "Once they become aware of the presence of patrol planes, pirate ships would restrain their activities."

8) Afghan reconstruction assistance: Japan, South Korea to dispatch experts for joint vocational training

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
February 6, 2009

The governments of Japan and South Korea will jointly provide vocational training for Afghans starting this spring at the earliest. The plan is part of their assistance for the reconstruction of that nation. In extending assistance, both countries will dispatch experts to a vocational training center, which they have constructed in Afghanistan. They will also set up a framework for them to back activities of non-governmental organizations (NGO) that are engaging in agricultural activities in Afghanistan.

Japan and South Korea will aim at reaching agreement during a meeting between Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone and South Korean Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Yu Myung Hwan on the 11th. The two countries had already held a bureau directors-level meeting in Seoul late last month to discuss cooperation to Afghanistan. They are now moving ahead with the work of boiling down specific projects for cooperation. The Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Korea International Cooperation Agency will be in charge of implementing joint projects.

The international community, starting with the Obama administration, attaches the highest importance to Afghanistan in operations to eradicate terrorism. Cooperation between Japan and South Korea in Afghanistan will likely become one showcase item when they make a public appeal on their international contributions.

Talks to sign an agreement on nuclear cooperation and expansion of exchanges of college students will also likely be on the agenda of the bilateral foreign ministerial meeting. Discussing a plan to set up a framework for bilateral dialogue on cultural exchanges has also been floated. Regarding the North Korea issue, both ministers will confirm cooperation for the realization of nuclear abolition.

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9) Okinawa Kadena assembly calls for immediate removal of U.S. F-22 fighters

AKAHATA (Page 2) (Full)
February 6, 2009

The U.S. Air Force forcibly deployed 12 F-22A Raptors, a top-of-the-line stealth jet fighter, from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa during the period of Jan. 10-25. In reaction to this move, the Kadena town assembly held a special meeting yesterday and unanimously approved a resolution and a written opinion calling on the U.S. to immediately remove the fighters.

This is the second temporary deployment of Raptors since February 1, 2007. The U.S. Air Force plans to deploy the fighters for three months until March. Their training at the base has already started, inflicting suffering on citizens with the roar of planes.

At Kadena Air Base, 10 F-16 fighters from Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska have also joined training with the F-22 fighters starting on Jan. 20. The training has caused roars measured at more than 105 decibels everyday.

The resolution denounces the repeated flights and training of the

fighters, noting: "The Air Force is strengthening the functions of Kadena Air Base, deviating from its pledge in the plan on the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan to lighten the burden on the people of Okinawa. The U.S. forces are apparently paving the way to deploy such fighters on a regular basis." The resolution then demands that the U.S. forces promptly stop the joint training and remove the fighters from the base.

The resolution also calls for rescinding a provision (a proviso) that allows the exceptional application of the agreement reached between Japan and the U.S. to ban takeoffs from midnight through dawn and to prevent noise.

10) Nagasaki citizens protest against U.S. warship's port call

AKAHATA (Page 3) (Full)
February 6, 2009

The USS Blue Ridge (displacement: 19,6000 tons, crewmembers: about 1,100), the flagship of the U.S. Seventh Fleet, arrived at Nagasaki port yesterday morning amid opposition from local pacifists and other groups shouting: "Blue Ridge, get out!."

The groups then held a protest rally, in which about 140 people expressed their anger at the port call.

At the rally, protesters criticized the entry of a warship capable of carrying nuclear weapons into a port of the city that had been atomic bombed by the United States. One participant argued: "The Blue Ridge is a ship that can command war operations. Its visit must be for military purposes. It must not be allowed." Another shouted: "Port calls open the way to war."

U.S. warships have visited Nagasaki port for four consecutive years since 2006, with the Blue Ridge's visit marking its 17th. The U.S. Forces Japan spokesperson explains that the port call is designed to

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promote mutual friendship between Japan and the U.S. Local municipalities have demanded of the U.S. Consulate, the Foreign Ministry and other organizations that the visit be halted, taking into consideration the sentiments of local people.

The warship is scheduled to leave port on the morning of the 9th.

Shigemitsu Tanaka, a 68-year-old radiation victim, commented: "The governor, who has jurisdiction over the port, is authorized to reject the visit. Adopting the method taken by Kobe City, the governor should show his resolve not to allow a nuclear-carrying warship to enter the port."

Representatives from the Japanese Communist Party Southern District Committee in Nagasaki and the Nagasaki municipal assembly had asked the mayor to withdraw the port-call plan three days before the vessel arrived at the port.

11) Yomiuri-Waseda poll: LDP down to 54 PERCENT , DPJ up to 51 PERCENT over governing competence

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Abridged)
February 6, 2009

In the run-up to the next election for the House of Representatives, the Yomiuri Shimbun conducted a face-to-face joint public opinion survey with Waseda University to probe changes in the public's attitude toward the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) about their competence to run the government. In the survey, it became clear that public evaluation of the LDP has sharply declined. The survey was conducted from Jan. 31 through Feb. 1. In the survey, respondents were asked if they thought the LDP was competent to run the government. In response to this question, 54 PERCENT answered "yes." The figure has fallen from a 67 PERCENT rating for October last year and then dropped further to 61 PERCENT for December last year. In the case of the DPJ, the figure has been on the rise from 46 PERCENT to 50 PERCENT and 51 PERCENT . The figures show that

the two major parties are now on par in their rivalry to run the government.

In the meantime, respondents were also asked if they thought the DPJ could be entrusted with the reins of government. To this question, the proportion of affirmative answers rose from 58 PERCENT for October last year to 65 PERCENT for December last year. In the latest survey as well, the DPJ marked 64 PERCENT. The figure shows that about two thirds of the public are in favor of a change of government. However, there was no increase in the proportion of affirmative answers for the DPJ, although there was an increase in the proportion of those skeptical of the LDP's governing competence. This is presumably because there was no increase in the proportion of those regarding the DPJ as competent to run the government.

The survey this time was conducted of 3,000 persons chosen from among the nation's voting population. Answers were obtained from 1,782 persons (59.4 PERCENT).

12) Preparations for a DPJ-SDP alliance not yet moving forward

ASAHI (Page 4) (Abridged slightly)
February 6, 2009

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The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the largest opposition force, considers the Social Democratic Party (SDP) as its coalition partner after a change in government. The SDP is, however, is wavering over whether it should join a DPJ-led government. Although SDP Chairperson Mizuho Fukushima has asserted that her party's top priority is to win the general election for the House of Representatives, some party members have called for early preparations for a change in government, concerned about the recurrence of a 'nightmare' in 1994, when the party was forced to change its policy under the coalition government of Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama.

"As there was a question whether the party would (join a government), we decided that discussion should be started by the three executive members," SDP Secretary General Yasumasa Shigeno said yesterday at a press conference after the executive meeting.

The DPJ, which advocates the need for forming a coalition government of opposition parties, has often sent out "love calls" to the SDP. This is because the SDP's cooperation is indispensable to the DPJ, since it does not hold a majority of the House of Councillors seats, even if it can gain a sole majority of the Lower House in the next snap election. DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa attended for the first time a party hosted Fukushima on Feb. 4 in Tokyo. In his speech in the party, Ozawa stressed: "In order to replace the malfunctioning government, we must seriously cooperate with each other."

The SDP has, however, yet to make a formal decision on the matter. The fact that the party was forced to change its security policy, including acceptance of the constitutionality of the Self-Defense Forces, when the Murayama coalition government was formed, is still fresh in many SDP lawmakers' memories. Therefore, some SDP members are concerned that if the party participates in a government without making adequate preparations, it will be in a quandary when dealing with such issues as SDF overseas dispatch.

Fukushima stated: "The political situation will change after the election. We will then make a decision after going through discussions." A senior party member, however, said:

"As we have cooperated with the DPJ in elections, our party has in effect formed an alliance with the DPJ. If our party goes into the election without debate and not making its positions clear, the party will collapse."

13) New Komeito executive denies impropriety of Hamayotsu using home as office

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
February 6, 2009

A weekly magazine reported that a political group linked to New Komeito Acting President Toshiko Hamayotsu had registered her private residence as her main office and had logged approximately 14 million yen as expenses operating the office during three years from 2005 through 2007. Responding to this allegation, Secretary General Kazuo Kitagawa said in a executive meeting yesterday: "There is no problem at all."

According the party information unit, Hamayotsu registered her private residence in Tokyo as her main office when she ran for the House of Councillors election in 1992, but she has used the Diet

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members' office building as her private office after elected. A unit member said that the office expenses included transportation, communication and printing expenses used in the Diet members' building and there was no impropriety.

14) Premier calls for reviewing division of Japan Post into four companies, saying, "I have been against postal privatization since the Koizumi Cabinet"

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)
February 6, 2009

As a result of the privatization of postal services in 2007, four spin-off companies were established under Japan Post Holdings. Referring to this management system, Prime Minister Taro Aso during a meeting of the Lower House Budget Committee held on the afternoon of February 5 indicated his view that he felt it necessary to review this system. He said, "It is time to review whether the present four-company system is efficient or not."

Postal services were split into Japan Post Service Co., Japan Post Network Co., Japan Post Bank, and Japan Post Insurance Co. A point has been made that services have been declined due to a lack of cooperation among the four companies.

The prime minister last November revealed his intention to take a second look at the postal privatization, including the freeze on the sale of stocks of those companies. Following this, a project team was set up in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). However, looking into items up for revision that require amendments to the related law, such as a review of the four-company system, had been put on hold with consideration given to LDP members opposing revisions. The prime minister's remark this time could revitalize discussion to take a second look at the postal privatization.

Aso served as internal affairs minister during the 3rd Koizumi Cabinet, which enacted the postal privatization. Regarding this, he said: "I in the end agreed on the privatization as a cabinet member. However, I was against postal privatization. I was removed from the post (in the cabinet reshuffle carried out after that), because it was known that I was against the privatization."

The prime minister later told reporters: "The government's postal privatization committee is in charge of the work of taking a second look at the privatized postal services. My position is to receive the panel's decision. I am not in a position of saying 'do that' or 'do this' to the panel concerning the specifics of the decision it reached." He thus indicated a stance of closely watching discussions by the panel.

The Lower House Budget Committee on the 5th basically ended the three-day interpellations on the fiscal 2009 budget bill.

ZUMWALT